

WOODEN PEGS— Solid structure of Courthouse roof is seen in pioneer craftsmanship of mortised and tenon beams held in place by wooden pegs.



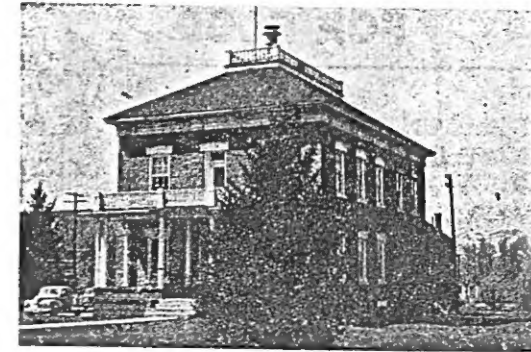
WOODWORK — Pioneer vigor is shown in strong, clean lines of Courthouse window.



PIONEER COURT HOUSE— Wasatch County's tiny pioneer courthouse served nearly a century. Plans now call for razing the building to make way for new, modern structure.

Tall Taxes & Short

BY LADAWN ERCANBRACK



I read of the coming dedication of the lovely new courthouse. To my mind's eye came one of the buildings that did not remain as part of the red sandstone square. We said our goodbyes and the old courthouse became history on a page — for buildings it seems, have about the same life span as man, unless some transplanting is done.

The structural servant subsided around the age of 86, after all those years of public service — and again like man, replaced by youth. Like the Olympic runner, the new building will now take its turn at carrying the torch.

The old courthouse was built during the years of 1878 and 1882. (Probably a little over 23 years after the first settlers arrived in Heber.) To help us more readily recall these years, let us visualize in our minds that Utah had not as yet gained Statehood and was only a territory of the United States whose president was Chester A. Arthur of Vermont. The church president was John Taylor and the Wasatch Stake had not been organized.

THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT of the territory was probate judges and selectmen. It was proposed by them on March 4, 1878 that the south half of the public square be the site of the Court House. Thomas H. Giles and Abram Hatch were assigned to direct the erection of the building. Construction records are incomplete, but on Jun 3, 1878 records show authorization to pay contractors.

September 2, 1878, authorization was granted by the selectmen for borrowing funds to finish at least one room of the building, but work apparently lagged as construction was still being recorded in the minutes on March 8, 1880.

By September 6, 1880, the court house committee reported to the selectmen that expenditures totaled \$3,793.66. Work was apparently completed by September of 1882 when costs were reported at about \$4,600, plus \$250 for furniture. Other notations show the installation of a safe in 1886, landscaping in 1889 and then addition construction and remodeling of the building later on.

Other noteworthy happenings of 1882 are the following, the Edmunds Anti-polygamy bill became law; the Constitution of the (hopeful) state of Utah was adopted at a constitution convention held at Salt Lake City; the Salt Lake Assembly Hall was dedicated; Liberty Park in Salt Lake City was formally opened to the public; as well as the Deseret Hospital being dedicated; President John Taylor's wife passed away; and Heber J. Grant was called to the Council of the Twelve.

Of the family of red sandstone buildings on the public square, the jail came first. It was constructed in 1878. Next to the eldest was the courthouse, 1879-1882; the Tabernacle, 1887-1889; and last of all was the Social Hall or Amusement Hall as it was at first called, 1906-1907.

